

FWHCA Update Technical Advisory Group (TAG)

Kick-off Meeting Notes

September 20, 2013
1:00 pm – 3:00 pm
Commissioner's Hearing Room
1 NE 6th Street
Coupeville, WA

Attendees: Susan Berta (Orca Network), Karen Bishop (Whidbey Island Conservation District), Lowell Dickson (teleconference) (Washington Department of Natural Resources), Steve Erickson (Whidbey Environmental Action Network), Sarah Schmidt (Whidbey Audubon), George Wilhere (teleconference) (Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife), Todd Zackey (teleconference) (Tulalip Tribes), Dan Nickel (Watershed Company - Island County's consultant), Jennifer Thomas (Parametrix - Island County's consultant), David Wechner (Island County), and Kira Swanson (Island County)

Introductions: 1:00-1:20

- Round table introduction by TAG members, consultants, staff
- Welcome by Director Wechner
 - Island County appreciates time TAG members are dedicating to process
 - TAG purpose is as a science advisory group, not a policy group.
- Meeting agendas and meeting summaries will be posted on Island County website at: <http://www.islandcounty.net/planning/FishandWildlifeHabitatConservationAreaUpdate.html>

Review TAG Statement of Purpose

- Review of TAG Statement of Purpose Document
- Discussion of public comment at TAG meetings:
 - Decision TAG will take public comments and questions for five minutes at the beginning and end of meetings
 - Comments and questions should be focused on science
 - Section 1.2.3 in TAG Statement of Purpose should be changed to say "testimony" rather than "comment"
- Discussion of how TAG will receive public comments between meetings:
 - Public comments will be sent to Kira Swanson at k.swanson@co.island.wa.us
 - Kira Swanson will compile the comments and circulate them to TAG members for review
- Discussion of email protocols and TAG discussion through email:
 - Concern expressed about the potential for large amounts of FWHCA Update TAG related email
 - Concern expressed that it might not be possible to communicate everything during TAG meetings
 - Distinction made between decision making and important discussion. Questions and information can be distributed through email, but decision and discussion should take place during meetings
 - Request that questions be sent to Island County staff and that staff distribute email to group to help reduce email traffic

- Comments and questions should be forwarded to Kira and Kira will forward onto to the consultants or group

FWHCA Update Schedule

- Review of FWHCA Update Schedule and Grant deliverables
- Discussion around FWHCA Update TAG meeting times
 - Question if regularly scheduled meetings, such as Tuesday or Thursday afternoons would make scheduling easier for TAG members
 - Decision that Tuesday afternoons would work best for TAG members present at the meeting
 - Kira Swanson will follow-up with TAG members who couldn't attend this meeting and confirm this time works for them, and then send invitations to future TAG meetings
- Question about how comments should be submitted for the BAS bibliography review
 - Comments should be forwarded to Kira Swanson and she will forward to the consultant, or to the group if further discussion is required
- Question about case studies identified in Task 5 – Draft Revised Policies and regulations
 - Suggestion that the case study include regulatory applications
 - Dan Nickel explained that the case studies are intended to run through several real world scenarios to test the application of the regulations
- Review of FWHCA Update Draft Public Participation Plan and Preliminary Schedule
 - Question about the Public Participation Plan and Preliminary Schedule dates not matching the FWHCA Update schedule provided at the meeting
 - Kira Swanson explained that the Public Participation Plan is primarily focused on public participation and centers around public meeting dates, these are slightly different than the FWHCA Update schedule which is focused on completion of work products

BAS Bibliography Discussion

- Suggestion that it would be helpful to have abstracts for the documents identified in the list
 - Dan Nickel agrees that it would be helpful and is working on compiling the documents. He suggests that it might first be helpful to finalize the list and if there are any documents missing from the list that TAG members provide them
- Steve Erickson offered to group the documents into a database and share this with the group
- Jennifer Thomas provided a brief history and explanation of what Best Available Science (BAS) is and where it comes from:
 - Jennifer explains that Island County is not a river based ecosystem and that some of documents provided in the BAS bibliography list may not apply
 - Jennifer suggests that each TAG member has their own area of expertise and she suggests that they review the list and see what is missing based on their knowledge
- Discussion of Watershed Characterization and how that local data will be incorporated:
 - Jennifer Thomas and George Wilhere explain that the local data will be overlaid
- Discussion of how far out into the Puget Sound FWHCA's extend:
 - The Shoreline Master Program (SMP) covers critical areas in the shoreline jurisdiction

- Question about how other jurisdictions handle habitat areas of local importance
 - Jennifer Thomas explained that in King County there was a team of ecologists working to identify what species were present in King County and where those species were located
 - Question of how ecologists came up with that species list
 - Jennifer Thomas explains when it was first created, ecologists used library searches and research
 - Suggestion that peer reviewed research may not have been conducted in Island County, but there are groups who have completed inventories
 - Jennifer Thomas said that inventories could be useful
 - Question about accuracy of these inventories, and other forms of research such as master's theses
 - Jennifer Thomas explains that BAS should be peer reviewed and that there should be caveats to information gathered from the gray literature
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Public Comments

- Question about what type of information is gray literature and how it could be incorporated in the FWHCA Update
 - Jennifer Thomas explains that the Washington Administrative Code (WAC) spells out what is BAS that there is a hierarchy of considerations regarding what constitutes BAS